Web table E Levels of evidence (adapted from Health Development Agency guidelines)[1]

Level of evidence	Type of evidence
1++	High quality meta-analyses; systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials (including cluster randomised controlled trials); or randomised controlled trials with a very low risk of bias
1+	Well conducted meta-analyses; systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials; or randomised controlled trials with a low risk of bias
1–	Meta-analyses; systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials; or randomised controlled trials with a high risk of bias
2++	High quality systematic reviews of, or individual high quality, non-randomised intervention studies (controlled non-randomised trial, controlled "before and after" trial, interrupted time series study, or repeat cross sectional trial); comparative cohort and correlation studies with a very low risk of confounding, bias, or chance; and high quality economic impact models using valid data
2+	Well conducted, non-randomised intervention studies (controlled non-randomised trial, controlled "before and after" trial, interrupted time series study, or epeat cross sectional trial); comparative cohort and correlation studies with a low risk of confounding, bias, or chance; and well conducted economic impact models using valid data
2–	Non-randomised intervention studies (controlled non-randomised trial, controlled "before and after" trial, interrupted time series study, or epeat cross sectional trial); comparative cohort and correlation studies with a high risk of confounding, bias, or chance; and low quality economic impact models or economic impact models using non-valid data
3	Non-analytical studies (for example, case reports or case series)
4	Expert opinion, formal consensus

1. Weightman A, Ellis S, Cullum A, Sander L, Turley R. *Grading evidence and recommendations for public health interventions: developing and piloting a framework.* Health Development Agency, 2005.